

sports

Astros' bullpen loses 8-6 lead

Giants rally past Houston, 9-8

United Press International
HOUSTON—While veteran second baseman Joe Morgan may be looking at a future at third base for the San Francisco Giants, Houston manager Bill Virdon is looking to the bullpen. Morgan, who normally alter-

nates with Duane Kuiper at second, played third Wednesday night for the first time in his career so both he and Kuiper would be in the lineup, and together they scored three runs in the Giants' 9-8 triumph.

But it was a pinch-hit single in the eighth inning by Max Venable that scored Johnnie LeMaster to give the Giants the victory. Venable's hit capped a com-

back mounted by the Giants after they blew an earlier 6-1 lead.

"It's nice to get a game winner," Venable said. "I hit it hard in my mind before I went to bat. I knew I'd get a piece of it and I did."

Fred Breining, 4-1, picked up the victory and was elated at the Giants' effort.

"Our hitting has been excellent lately, so I just tried to forget about the score and pitch like it was tied," Breining said. "The win for me doesn't mean as much as the fact that we came back after blowing a big lead."

Virdon blamed the loss entirely on Houston pitching.

"I certainly can't fault the hitters tonight," Virdon said. "Our pitching is being looked into. We're attempting some things to find someone who can catch fire. (Don) Sutton has been our only consistent pitcher, and he's had some problems lately."

"The plans are to start (reliever Dave) Smith Friday," Virdon said. "He was a starter in the minors before we called him up as a reliever."

San Francisco took a 2-0 lead in the second on a two-run homer by Darrell Evans and Hous-

ton narrowed the margin to 2-1 in the second on doubles by Jose Cruz and Alan Ashby.

The Giants knocked out Houston starter Nolan Ryan and raised their lead to 6-1 in the fifth, only to fall behind 8-6 in the sixth. Houston's big inning began when Art Howe walked and scored on Danny Heep's double. Dickie Thon singled to score Heep and make it 6-4. Ray Knight scored Thon with a single and Cruz followed with a single. Ashby then doubled home two runs to give Houston the lead. Phil Garner doubled to score Ashby.

San Francisco scored once in the seventh. Then Evans doubled off loser Frank LaCorte, 0-2, to lead off the eighth and went to third on a fielder's choice. LeMaster's bunt scored Evans to tie it 8-8. Tom O'Malley then doubled LeMaster to third to set up Venable's game-winning hit.

Morgan completed his first game at third without a hitch and credited some of his success to the playing surface.

"It's strange, but on Astro-



Bill Virdon

know about playing back at Candlestick (Park) though need a little practice."

Corbett's relief pitching sends Angels past Texas

United Press International
ANAHEIM, Calif.—Even though Reggie Jackson provided the thunder, Doug Corbett's eighth save of the season provided the widest smiles for the California Angels Wednesday night.

Jackson two-run homer in the seventh inning came with the Angels leading 2-1 and they went on to beat the Texas Rangers 5-3.

Jackson is paid to hit homers — he has 14 this season — just as Corbett is paid to provide late-inning relief.

The veteran reliever, however, has been hit hard this season, and entered Wednesday night's game with a not-too-glossy 5.74 ERA. But he pitched a strong 1 1/2 innings, getting three groundouts and one strikeout to allow Ken Forsch, who allowed eight hits and two runs in seven innings, to even his record at 6-6.

The Angels gave up outfielder Tom Brunansky, their most promising minor leaguer, to acquire Corbett from the Minnesota Twins earlier this season, and while Corbett has been struggling, Brunansky has been wowing veteran observers with his home run power.

But Corbett, who earned more saves than any pitcher in the American League over the past two years, figures things are about to even out.

"For a month, I've been throwing improperly," he said. "Pitching coach Tom Morgan spotted it. Rather than going straight at the hitter, I was opening up my delivery about six inches.

"I lost velocity and my sinker had a lump in it started dropping sooner and the hitters adjusted to it."

Morgan was a sinkerballer in his playing days and Corbett said he's helped him tremendously.

"I feel like it's (the sinkerball) back, but I feel that I have 100 percent consistency," Corbett said. "I feel like I'm right on the borderline. I won't be too long before I'm 100 percent."

Jackson's homer came off loser Doc Medich, 5-6. Don Baylor, who singled to open the inning scored ahead of Jackson. Jackson struck out first two times against Medich before singling his third at-bat.

"I've never really had problems with Medich before," he said. "I don't know what the hell I'm doing the first two at-bats."

The Angels scored another run in the eighth when Tim Lincecum's squeeze bunt scored Fred Lewis who had singled and moved to third on Tim DeCinces' single.

Texas rookie first baseman Dave Hosteler had two long home runs, giving him nine in just games, and Buddy Bell clubbed his seventh homer for the Rangers.

"He's a young guy with great strength," Ranger manager Don Zimmer. "He's going to look bad two nights in a row, but I'm not going to look at him because I know the night he's going to do what he did tonight."

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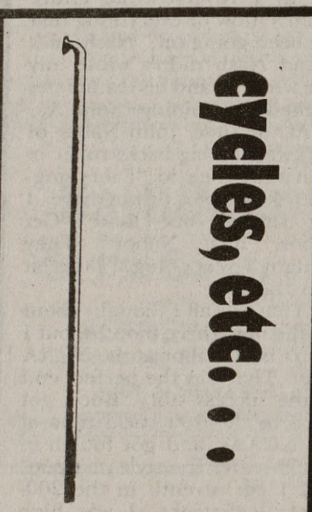
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